

Message

From: alertsadmin@opisnet.com [alertsadmin@opisnet.com]
Sent: 3/23/2021 4:08:09 PM
To: Hengst, Benjamin [Hengst.Benjamin@epa.gov]
Subject: BIOFUELS UPDATE: ***Calif. Senators Ask Biden for US Ban on Internal Combustion Engine Vehicles

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***Calif. Senators Ask Biden for US Ban on Internal Combustion Engine Vehicles

California's two U.S. senators are calling on President Joe Biden to follow their state's lead and set a date for a national ban on the sale of new cars with internal combustion engines (ICE).

In a letter to the president, Democrats Diane Feinstein and Alex Padilla also ask Biden to tighten federal fuel economy standards and to reinstate California's authority to set greenhouse gas and zero-emission vehicle standards.

Former President Donald Trump had loosened federal standards and stripped California of its ability to set its own environmental standards for vehicles, a move the state is fighting in court.

While Biden has said enacting stricter regulations to fight climate change is a priority of his administration, he hasn't committed to supporting a ban on ICE vehicles.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom in September 2020 issued an executive order requiring all new passenger vehicles sold in the state to be zero emission by 2035. However, a January report by the California Energy Commission said the state will need to add hundreds of thousands of new charging stations and make "significant public investment" over the next decade to meet Newsom's goals. California alone would need about 1.5 million chargers by 2030 to support an estimated 8 million light-duty vehicles, and an additional 157,000 chargers will be needed to support 180,000 medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, according to the report.

This is significantly more chargers than the network of 500,000 chargers nationwide that Biden promised as part of the clean energy plan he released as a candidate.

Newsom is the target of a recall effort, and it's unclear what the future of his ICE vehicle ban is if he is removed from office.

Nonetheless, in their letter Feinstein and Padilla call on the president "to follow California's lead and set a date by which all new cars and passenger trucks sold be zero-emission vehicles."

"The automobile industry has shown it has the ingenuity and resources to reimagine our transportation systems in consumer-friendly ways," they wrote. "We urge your administration to take advantage of this effort and make real progress in coordination with states, like California, that share your goals to aggressively fight climate change by eliminating harmful pollution from the transportation sector."

The senators also ask Biden to undo the Trump administration's Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles fuel efficiency rule and reinstate fuel economy standards set earlier under former President Barack Obama. The Trump rule tightens corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) and maximum CO2 emissions by 1.5% each year from model years 2021 through 2026. That's significantly less stringent than the standards issued in 2012 by the Obama administration, which called for a 5% annual tightening of standards.

The Trump administration argued that automakers couldn't meet the older standards, which also raised the cost of new vehicles.

In their letter, Feinstein and Padilla say they "support aggressive national standards for greenhouse gas emissions, clean transportation technology, and sensible fuel economy for passenger vehicles."

"We urge your administration to restore pollution standards that actually protect public health and welfare, set fuel economy standards at the maximum level feasible, and advance national standards for zero-emission vehicles and

equipment to ensure the United States remains a leader in clean technology, engineering, and manufacturing," the senators wrote.

They say that "at an absolute minimum," national standards should mirror those included in an agreement finalized last year between California and several auto manufacturers, including Ford, Honda, Volkswagen, Volvo and BMW, that calls for cars and light trucks to obtain a higher fuel-efficiency beginning with the 2022 model year and reduce greenhouse gases by 3.7% every year over a five-year period.

Even without a national ban on ICE vehicle sales, many automakers are already moving toward a future in which they sell on electric vehicles (EVs). General Motors, for example, pledged in January to phase out ICE vehicle production by 2035, while other manufacturers are aggressively moving to expand their EV fleets.

--Reporting by Steve Cronin, scronin@opisnet.com; Editing by Barbara Chuck, bchuck@opisnet.com

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